

Talk with your Healthcare Professional about Breastfeeding Support



Prepare for breastfeeding success by talking with your doctor about the following:

1. Breastfeeding is your choice, be fully informed.

Your doctor should tell you about the benefits of breastfeeding and the risks of formula feeding so that you can make an educated decision about how to feed your baby.

2. Everyone involved with caring for mother and baby need to be educated and supportive of breastfeeding.

Make sure the father of the baby and other caregivers are educated and supportive of breastfeeding. Choose a healthcare professional for you and your baby who is supportive of breastfeeding and able to help should any problems arise.

3. If possible, ask your healthcare provider to avoid procedures during birth that may interfere with breastfeeding.

Procedures that may interfere with initial and early successful breastfeeding may include pain medications that sedate mother or baby, an episiotomy, continuous electronic fetal monitoring, and separating the mother and baby after birth.

4. Ask your healthcare providers to place your baby skin-to-skin with you immediately after birth, unless it is not medically indicated.

Most babies are able to be placed skin-to-skin in order to accomplish the first feeding without help from others. Healthcare providers can dry the baby, assign APGAR scores, and do an initial physical exam while the baby is skin-to-skin with the mother. Other necessary procedures may be delayed until after the first breastfeed.

adph.org/perinatal

5. Ask your healthcare providers not to supplement your baby with water, glucose water, formula, or other fluids unless medically indicated.

If supplementation is needed, it should ONLY be ordered by your baby's doctor.

6. Try not to give your baby a pacifier while breastfeeding is being established (usually 3-4 weeks after birth).

Pacifiers can interfere with breastfeeding in some babies.

7. Make sure that breastfeeding is being observed and documented by your healthcare professionals. Do not be afraid to ask for breastfeeding support.

Your healthcare professionals should observe you breastfeeding and offer positive reinforcement. Information about discharge follow-up and support groups should be provided to you prior to leaving the hospital.

8. All breastfeeding infants should be seen by their primary medical provider (pediatrician) within 3-5 days after discharge from the hospital.

Ask your healthcare providers about scheduling the follow-up appointment before or immediately after you leave the hospital. Your baby's primary medical provider should check for jaundice, weight, ask about the number of times your baby feeds, the number of wet diapers and poops your baby has per day. You should also allow the healthcare team (lactation specialist, when applicable) to observe breastfeeding to make sure everything is going well.

9. Breastfed babies should be seen again by their primary medical provider at 2-3 weeks after birth to check weight again and make sure you and your baby are doing well during this time of lots of changes.

10. Babies need nothing to eat but their mother's milk for the first 6 months of life and may continue to breastfeed even after introducing foods.

This means that your baby will grow well and be healthy without any other foods or fluids. Talk to your healthcare providers about the appropriate time to start feeding solid foods, what to introduce, and how to introduce those foods.

11. Vitamin K will be given to your baby in the form of a shot at birth.

You need to supplement your breastfed baby with Vitamin D (400 IUs per day). Talk to your healthcare providers about where to get Vitamin D for an infant and how to give your baby Vitamin D.

12. If you and your baby have to be separated for any reason (medical, deployment, return to work, etc.), every effort should be made by your healthcare providers and employer to maintain breastfeeding through breast pumping.

Ask your entire team of healthcare providers to support your decision and requests as much as they possibly can.

13. Talk to your baby's daycare providers and your employer about your desire to continue breastfeeding after returning to work or school.

Mothers who continue to give their baby breastmilk after returning to work or school find that they worry less about their baby and are better able to focus on their tasks. By drinking breastmilk, babies continue to benefit from fewer trips to the doctor for illness, have less sickness, allergies, and upper respiratory illnesses. It is worth the extra effort to pump milk during break time. Having the support from caregivers, employers, and staff benefits mother, baby, and employers.

